

ANZ New Zealand Business Outlook

30 July 2026

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Contact

[Sharon Zollner](#) for more details.

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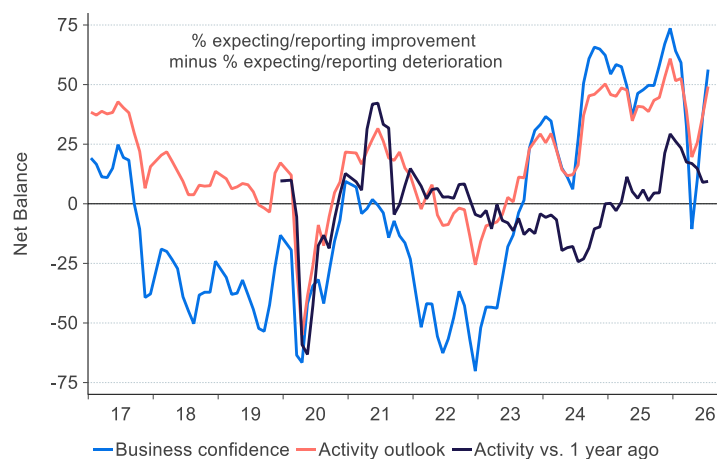
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- Business confidence jumped another 19 points in July to 56, while expected own activity rose 12 points to 49. Reported past activity rose 1 point to 10.
- Inflation indicators were softer. Inflation expectations eased from 3.36% to 3.14%, cost expectations fell from 85 to 78, and pricing intentions fell 4 points to a net 47% expecting to raise their prices in the next three months.
- In the responses received later in the month after the reminder was sent, activity indicators were lower and inflation indicators higher. Oil prices turned north and the RBNZ hiked the OCR between the early and late responses.

Figure 1. ANZ Business Confidence, Own Activity and Past Activity



Source: Macrobond, ANZ Research

Table 1. Results versus last month

	July	June	Comment
Business Confidence	56.1	36.6	Retail 67. Services lowest at 48. Canterbury 67.
Own Activity Outlook	49.3	36.9	Close to Jan level (pre-oil spike) but was 42 in the late-month sample.
Export Intentions	26.6	18.1	Manufacturing going ballistic (55) – highest since 2000! But their early/late split was 62/27.
Investment Intentions	22.8	16.5	Construction very strong, retail lagging.
Employment Intentions	18.1	9.4	Every sector higher than June except flat retail.
Residential Construction	42.5	25.0	Highest since Jan and lifted as month went on.
Commercial Construction	48.9	28.9	Highest since December.
Profit Expectations	28.7	13.0	Manufacturing only sector not to see a big lift.
Ease of Credit	1.4	-1.9	Dropped to -10 following the OCR hike.
Activity vs. 1 year ago	9.7	9.0	Manufacturing 26, construction -2.
Employment vs. 1 yr ago	-0.3	-4.6	Agri strongest, retail and construction weakest.
Pricing Intentions net %	47.2	50.7	Manufacturing 63, services 40.
Pricing Intentions % 3m out	1.78%	2.03%	Retail 2.6%, services 1.4%. Lower late-month.
Cost Expectations net %	78.2	84.7	Lowest since January.
Cost Expectations % 3m out	2.70%	3.24%	Lowest since Feb. Agri 3.6%, services 2.4%.
Wage Expectations % 12m out	2.52%	2.53%	Retail lowest at 1.9%, manuf. top at 2.9%.
Inflation Expectations 1y out	3.14%	3.36%	3.07% early-month, 3.32% late-month.

The general theme of this month's data is more optimism, with both business confidence and expected own activity at historically solid levels. In terms of past activity, manufacturing is highest (though it dipped), while agriculture saw a marked fall and is back in the pack after years of outperformance. Construction lifted and is almost back in the black.

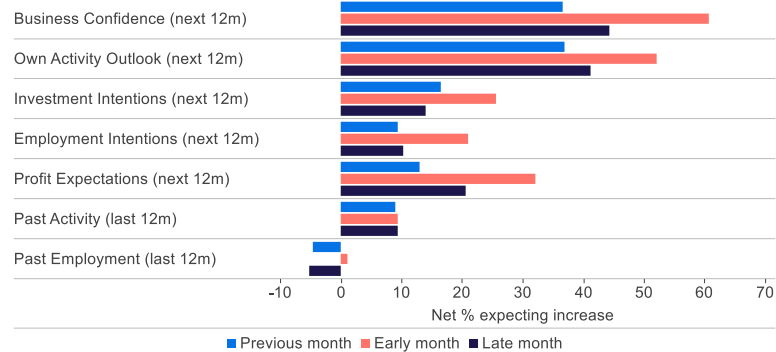
Figure 2. ANZBO past activity vs GDP



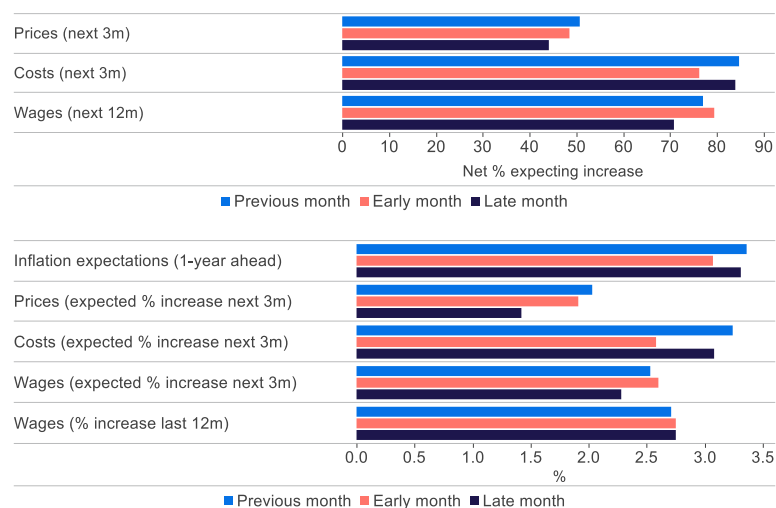
Source: Stats NZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

Between the very start of the month and the later-month responses (mainly received 22-23 July) the RBNZ raised the Official Cash Rate, and oil prices rose sharply as the situation in the Middle East deteriorated (and since then have risen further, then dropped sharply, and could have done anything by the time you read this). Figure 3 below shows forward-looking activity indicators were all lower later in the month, while differences in the past activity indicators were small. The late versus early inflation indicators were a very mixed bag. Fair enough; oil prices have been all over the shop.

Figure 3. Early versus late-month responses



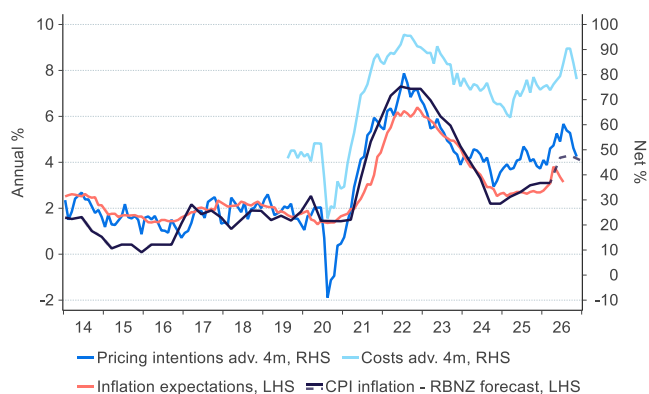
Source: Macrobond, ANZ Research



Source: Macrobond, ANZ Research

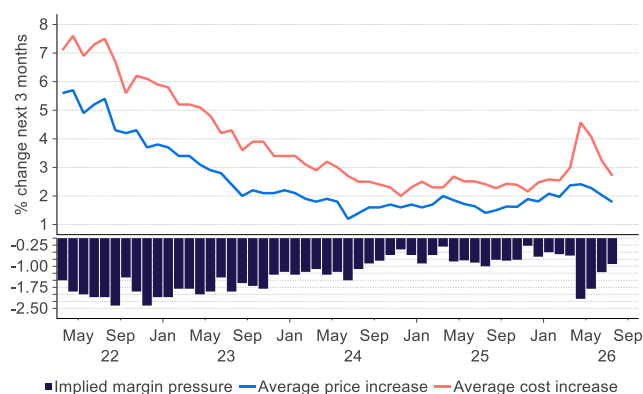
Taking the month as a whole, inflation indicators were slightly lower, and margin pressure reduced (figures 4-7). But with oil prices extremely volatile, it's very much a case of wait-and-see.

Figure 4. ANZBO inflation indicators and RBNZ CPI forecasts



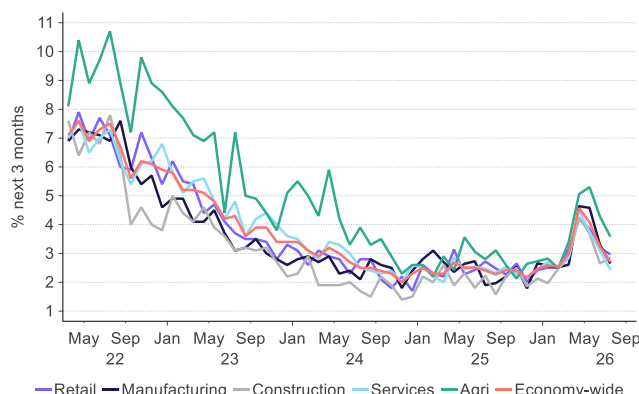
Source: Stats NZ, RBNZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

Figures 5. ANZBO expected costs, prices and implied margin pressure



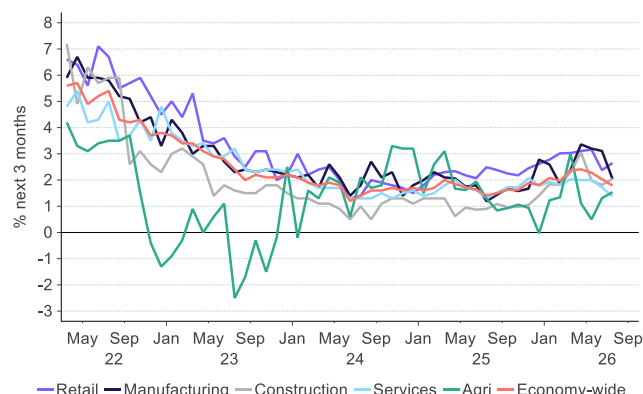
Source: ANZ Research

Figure 6. Cost expectations by sector



Source: ANZ Research

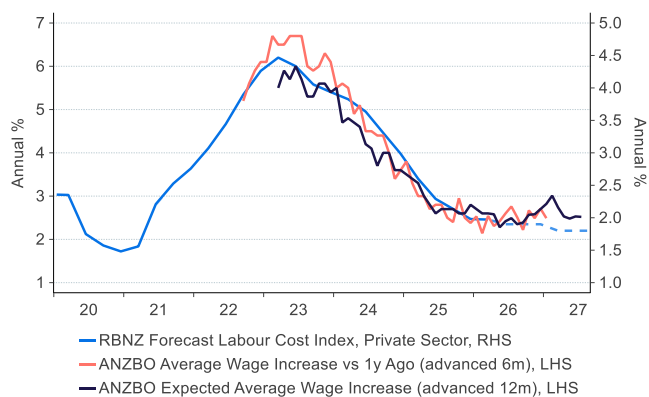
Figure 7. Pricing intentions by sector



Source: ANZ Research

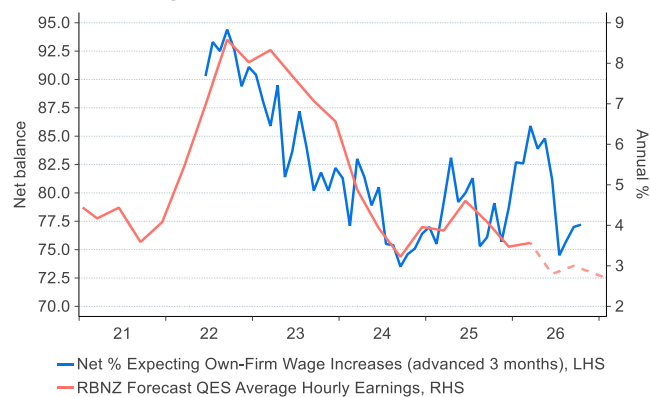
Wage intention indicators were little changed (Figures 8 and 9), but are a little bit on the high side comparing to the RBNZ's wage forecasts. Firms' wage-setting decisions are a complex mix of looking forward and backward, taking into account the cost of living, past and expected labour market conditions, past and expected profitability and more. In that light, it's potentially an interesting proxy for evolving medium-term inflation pressures, though we will need a longer data history to judge it fairly against that yardstick.

Figure 8. ANZBO past and intended average wages vs RBNZ Labour Cost Index forecast)



Source: RBNZ, Stats NZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

Figure 9. Net % of firms intending wage increases vs RBNZ QES wage forecast



Source: RBNZ, Stats NZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

The monthly changes heatmap (RHS) shows the broad lift in expected activity indicators and the decline in inflation pressures over the month as a whole. In level terms (LHS), pricing intentions remain very high compared to history, as do agriculture sector costs (where 100% of respondents expected higher costs). Business confidence and own activity expectations also remain above historical averages, but there is some patchiness across other forward-looking activity indicators.

Table 2. Heatmap

	Levels					Monthly changes				
	Retail	Mfg	Agric	Constrn	Serv	Retail	Mfg	Agric	Constrn	Serv
Business Confidence	68.6	65.9	81.0	54.0	48.1	24.2	7.9	46.5	21.9	17.7
Own activity outlook	38.5	63.0	38.1	54.9	48.6	9.6	7.0	-0.6	20.9	14.5
Activity vs. same month one year ago	0.0	26.1	19.0	-2.0	10.4	-13.3	-3.9	-13.3	5.7	8.2
Exports	26.3	47.2	55.0	14.7	21.1	15.2	10.6	34.3	12.0	3.6
Investment	9.8	20.0	28.6	38.0	20.7	0.9	11.7	2.8	11.1	4.1
Residential Construction	...	...	...	32.3	...	...	...	...	5.5	...
Commercial Construction	...	...	...	36.7	...	...	...	...	11.7	...
Employment	1.9	23.9	0	28.0	21.0	-0.3	5.9	9.7	12.9	9.4
Employment vs. same month one year ago	-17.3	2.2	9.5	-10.0	4.4	2.7	-11.8	9.5	-2.3	8.8
Profits	32.7	30.4	0.0	33.3	31.1	19.4	-7.6	22.6	23.9	17.0
Ease of Credit	-9.6	8.7	9.5	-4.0	4.3	-9.6	4.7	12.7	-5.9	8.6
Costs	76.5	78.3	100.0	74.0	76.8	6.0	-11.3	6.5	-10.9	-7.4
Pricing Intentions	62.7	63.0	40.0	48.0	40.2	1.3	-7.8	7.7	-6.7	-4.5

Note: Red indicates high, and blue, low, becoming more intense at the extremes. The colours take into account the historical average and variation in each series. For example, a series may be low compared to others but if that's not unusual, it may not be blue.

Our take

It feels like we need a weekly business confidence survey at the moment. Oil prices continue to leap and plummet as the headlines roll in. The key question for the economic outlook is, how will people respond? Any thought that calm 'normality' will soon make a comeback is likely fading fast. Will businesses decide to just get on with their required investments and hiring? Will households get on with their normal lives? Or will the uncertainty see many batten down the hatches and go into survival mode? Time will tell; the consequences could be long-lasting.

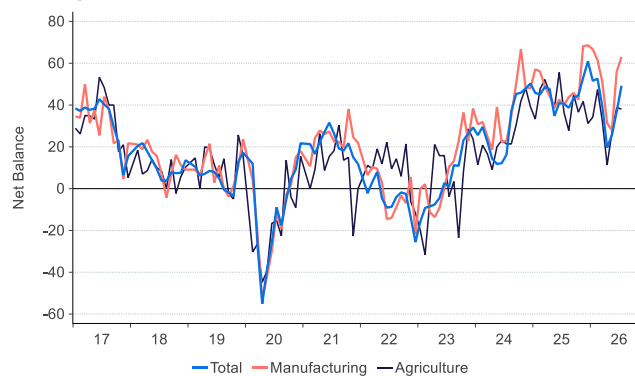
Survey Results July 2026

Net Balance	July	Previous (June)	Retail	Mfg	Agric	Constrn	Services
Business Confidence	56.1	36.6	67.3	65.9	81.0	54.0	48.1
Own Activity Outlook	49.3	36.9	39.6	63.0	38.1	54.9	48.6
Export Intentions	26.6	18.1	25.6	47.2	55.0	14.7	21.1
Investment Intentions	22.8	16.5	11.5	20.0	28.6	38.0	20.7
Cost Expectations	78.2	84.7	76.9	78.3	100.0	74.0	76.8
Residential Construction	42.5	25.0	...	...	...	42.5	...
Commercial Construction	48.9	28.9	...	...	...	48.9	...
Employment Intentions	18.1	9.4	1.9	23.9	0.0	28.0	21.0
Profit Expectations	28.7	13.0	30.2	30.4	0.0	33.3	31.1
Pricing Intentions	47.2	50.7	61.5	63.0	40.0	48.0	40.2
Ease of Credit Expectations	1.4	-1.9	-9.4	8.7	9.5	-4.0	4.3
Inflation Expectations (%)	3.14	3.36	3.27	3.05	2.99	3.19	3.12
Activity – same month one year ago	9.7	9.0	1.9	26.1	19.0	-2.0	10.4
Employment – same month one year ago	-0.3	-4.6	-15.1	2.2	9.5	-10.0	4.4
Price Expectations – 3 months from now (%)	1.78	2.03	3.0	1.8	1.3	1.8	1.8
Cost Expectations – 3 months from now (%)	2.70	3.24	2.9	2.7	3.6	2.9	2.4
Wages/Salaries – next 12 months (%)	2.52	2.53	1.9	2.9	2.8	2.3	2.6
Wages/Salaries – same month a year ago (%)	2.49	2.71	2.3	2.3	1.7	2.1	2.7

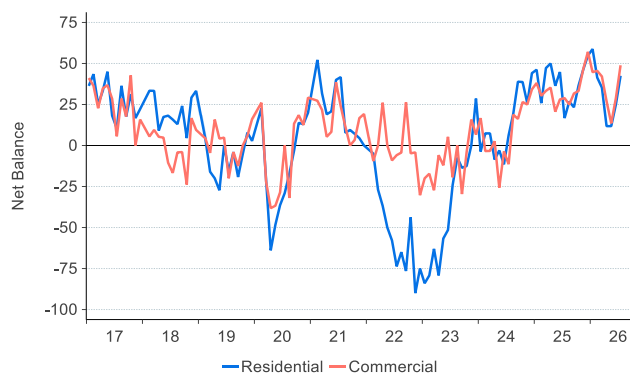
Note additional charts follow.

Additional charts

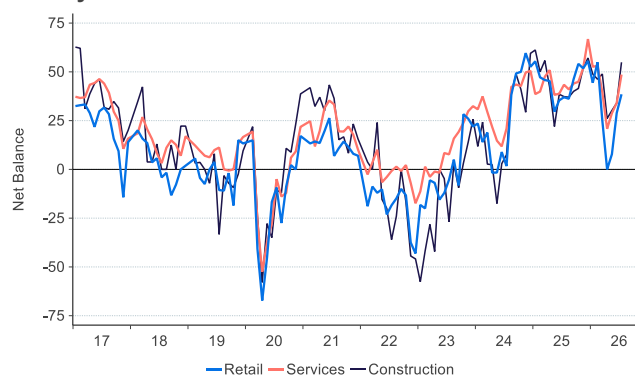
Activity outlook index



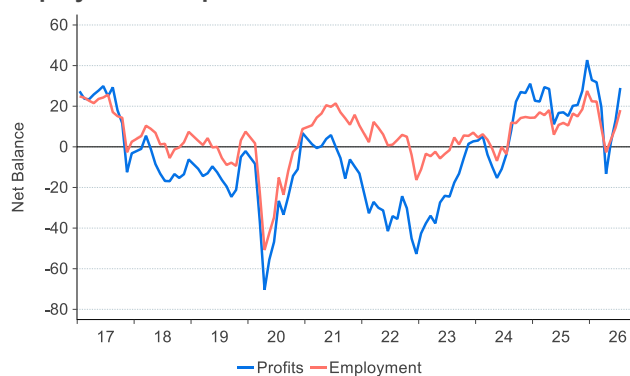
Construction intentions



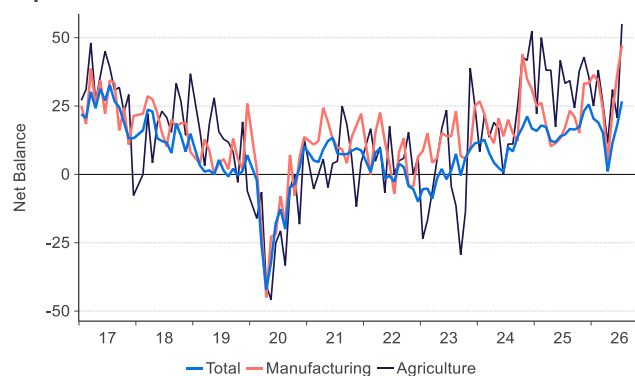
Activity outlook index



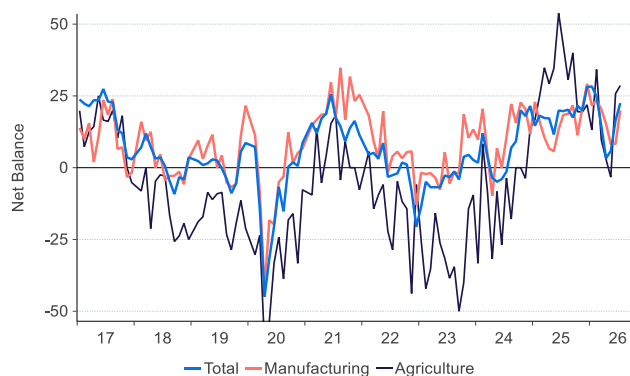
Employment and profit outlook



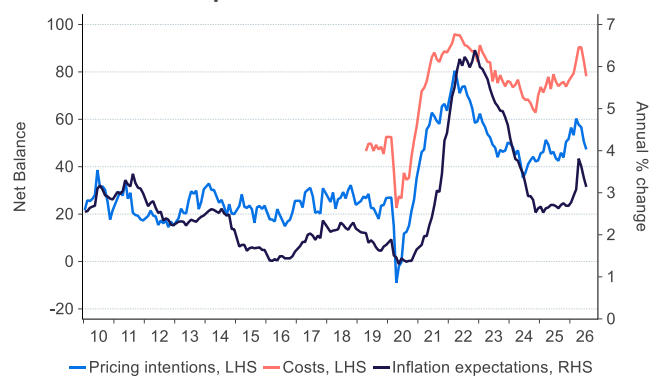
Export sales volumes



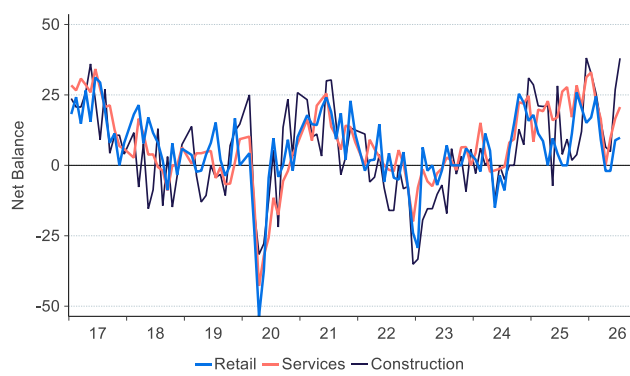
Investment intentions



Cost and inflation pressures



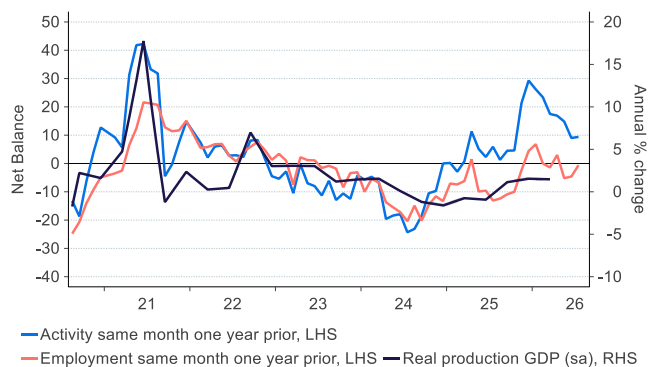
Investment intentions



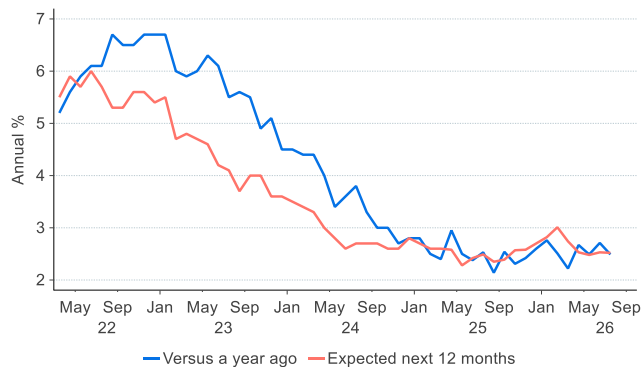
Net balance: % expecting improvement minus % expecting deterioration

Source: Statistics NZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

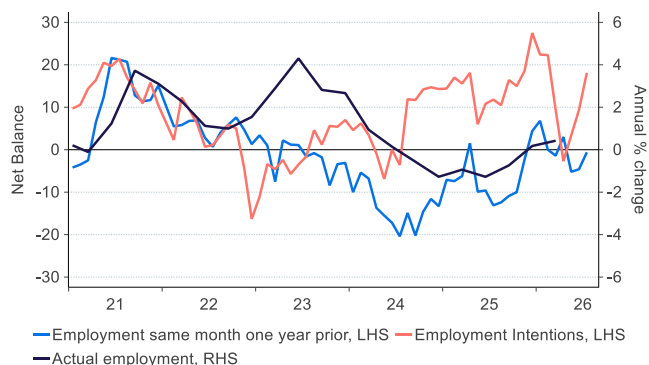
Experienced activity and GDP



Wage expectations and reported past wage growth



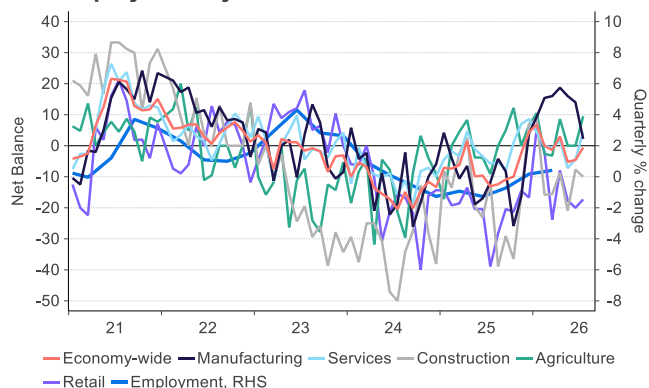
Experienced employment, employment intentions and employment



Average expected own firm prices and costs



Past employment by sector



Source: Stats NZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

Net balance: % expecting improvement minus % expecting deterioration

Source: Statistics NZ, Macrobond, ANZ Research

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Sharon Zollner

Chief Economist, New Zealand

Telephone: +64 9 357 4094

Email: sharon.zollner@anz.com

General enquiries:

research@anz.com

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David Croy

Senior Strategist

Market developments, interest rates, FX, unconventional monetary policy, liaison with market participants.

Telephone: +64 4 576 1022

Email: david.croy@anz.com



Matt Dilly

Agricultural Economist

Primary industry developments and outlook, structural change and regulation, liaison with industry.

Telephone: +64 21 221 6939

Email: matthew.dilly@anz.com



Miles Workman

Senior Economist

Macroeconomic forecast co-ordinator, economic developments, labour market dynamics, inflation, fiscal and monetary policy.

Telephone: +64 21 661 792

Email: miles.workman@anz.com



Matthew Galt

Senior Economist

Macroeconomic forecasting, economic developments, GDP, housing and credit dynamics.

Telephone: +64 21 633 469

Email: matthew.galt@anz.com



Natalie Denne

PA / Desktop Publisher

Business management, general enquiries, mailing lists, publications, chief economist's diary.

Telephone: +64 21 221 7438

Email: natalie.denne@anz.com

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